



SPC Eric Hughes (both)



## *The* **First Steps** *to* **Recovery**

Story by SGT Robb Huhn

**P**HYSICAL damage resulting from the Taliban's reign can be seen from almost every street corner in and around Kabul, Afghanistan — almost every building shows years of neglect and the consequences of war.

The Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force in Kabul is repairing some of the damage by reconstructing roads, hospitals and research facilities throughout Afghanistan.

SGT Robb Huhn is assigned to the 300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Afghanistan.

The CJCMOTF identifies quick-fix humanitarian projects throughout the country that are not being accomplished by the greater humanitarian-assistance community. It then coordinates its efforts with Afghan agencies and international and nongovernmental organizations in the country.

“We seek out the projects that will have the greatest impact on the Afghan people,” said MAJ Jeff Coggin, chief of the task force’s public-health department. These are referred to as National Impact Projects.

Once a NIP is identified, the CJCMOTF ensures that the project meets certain criteria. First, it must comply with Overseas Humanitarian Disaster Civic Aid guidelines. And the project must support the Afghan Transitional Authority, the recently elected government. Lastly, the CJCMOTF coordinates its efforts with various ministries to ensure that the project is “good for them and Afghanistan,” Coggin said. One of the

most important of the task force’s missions is to support the transitional government and the choices it makes for the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

After the approval process is complete, the Army solicits contractor bids for the project. Immediately after a contract has been awarded, laborers begin working to complete it. To support the local economy, contractors employ Afghans and purchase materials locally.

“The Afghan workers take a great deal of pride in their work. They realize that what they’re doing is for everyone,” said Coggin.

During the construction phase, coalition engineers, public-health professionals and local contractors periodically meet to ensure that the projects are being completed according to U.S. government standards, and that any unresolved questions can be answered.

“Everyone involved has a vital role,” Coggin said.

“If one link in the chain fails, then

the project fails,” added ILT Timmy King, a CJCMOTF engineer from the 37th Engineer Battalion at Fort Bragg, N.C.

All of the NIPS are located in Kabul. They range from a power and water complex that was destroyed during decades of war to pharmaceutical companies that provide medication to hundreds of sick and injured local citizens.

Because Kabul is the hub of Afghanistan, Coggin said, “whatever we do here will affect the rest of the country. A good example of that is the soon-to-be-restored Teachers Training College. If fixing a school for children helps one community, then fixing a school that trains teachers will help an entire nation.”

Ten NIPs are currently underway throughout Kabul, including the Teachers Training College and the restoration of the Kabul Dental Hospital. Several additional projects are in various stages of approval.

Currently, \$1.9 million has been allocated for Afghanistan’s NIPs. □

**(Far left) The rebuilding of the Bagram Bridge is an Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civil Assistance project conducted under the auspices of the Joint Coalition Civil-Military Operation Task Force.**

**(Left) MAJ Alex Reidey of the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion from Knoxville, Tenn., discusses the work on the Bagram Bridge with a local Afghan contractor.**

**(Right) Afghan contractors — supported by soldiers of the 489th Civil Affairs Bn. and 37th Engineer Bn. — completed this classroom at the Kabul Medical Institute. It is one of six such classrooms that will provide a better learning environment for Afghan medical students.**



SPC Eric Hughes





Elders representing the 92 villages of the Bagram district assemble to hear the details of a recent agreement to share work contract opportunities made available by coalition forces at Bagram Air Base.

## *The Quick — Fix and* Story by SSG Zelda Thomas-Gates *Beyond*

**S**EPT. 11 dramatically changed the lives of American and Afghans alike. Combat troops went out in search of al Qaeda and Taliban forces, and the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force was created to help rebuild the war-torn country.

Headed by COL Cassel J. Nutter

SSG Zelda Thomas-Gates is assigned to the 300th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Jr., of the 122nd Rear Operations Center, Georgia Army National Guard, the CJCMOTF is the first of its kind in the U.S. military to be created and deployed, he said.

Headquartered in Kabul, Afghanistan, it has subordinate civil-military operations centers in Karshi, Khanabad and Bagram, Afghanistan, and in Uzbekistan.

The CJCMOTF was initially given

the primary mission of providing humanitarian assistance through coordination with more than 24 international and nongovernmental organizations and the Afghan government.

“We’re not just a civil-affairs organization,” said Nutter. “We may have conventional and special-operations forces assigned, but we work to coordinate humanitarian efforts with

*"We may have conventional and special-operations forces assigned, but we work to coordinate humanitarian efforts with many organizations in order to relieve suffering."*

many organizations in order to relieve suffering."

The task force's augmentees include some 250 service members from six countries, five branches of the U.S. military and 25 units.

The CJCMOTF also has civil humanitarian liaison cells in Kabul, Bagram Air Base, Konduz, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Khandahar Airfield, Khowst, Deh Rawod and Bamian.

Each CHLC has four to seven people who conduct area assessments and coordinate with international and nongovernmental organizations and local Afghan leaders. They also nominate overseas humanitarian disaster and civil-assistance projects, and the team members to participate in those projects.

To date, the CJCMOTF has spent \$6 million on humanitarian projects. Of 116 approved projects, 53 have been completed, 60 are nearing completion and three have been transferred to other agencies for completion.



**MAJ Dave Young (left) of the 401st CA Bn. and a coalition civilian talk with an Afghan village elder about his community's needs.**

The task force has employed some 18,000 Afghan workers and benefited 50 schools serving some 62,000 students; 15 medical facilities serving some 526,000 people; one veterinary facility; 12 water projects benefiting an estimated 260,000 people; and 12 other building projects that provide life support and shelter to about 300,000 people, Nutter said.

Since its inception, the CJCMOTF

has participated in numerous humanitarian aid programs in conjunction with the Nahrin earthquake; Operations Anaconda and Condor; the Muslim pilgrimage; the Afghan grand council meeting; the opening of flight routes over Afghanistan; assessments of the threat of hemorrhagic fever in Tiawara province; and support of International Women's Day in Kabul. □

**Afghan workers put the finishing touches on new windows installed in the Kabul Medical Institute under a CJCMOTF contract.**



SPC Eric E. Hughes





(Above) A well repaired by members of the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion provides clean water for members of a Bagram neighborhood. (Left) MG Robert B. Osterberg, commander of the Army Reserve's 63rd Regional Support Command, looks on as the well is dedicated.

## Water Works

Story by SSG Zelda Thomas-Gates Photos by SGT Sean A. Terry

Houston, a project engineer for the CJCMOTF.

Many of the wells are in poor condition, and those that operate continuously eventually run dry. The villages that have water therefore attract a disproportionate number of refugees, which eventually creates another problem — overcrowding.

To prevent this, the CJCMOTF is working with local and national government representatives throughout Afghanistan to ensure water projects are distributed equitably and that their locations don't pose security risks to coalition forces.

"Because of our work, the Afghans are getting better medical care, children are going back to school and they have access to clean water," said 1LT Carolyn Harris, an engineer project

manager at the CJCMOTF.

Since early spring the CJCMOTF has helped the people of Herat through the completion of two irrigation projects. Additionally, the task force has provided Bagram with six wells; Khost, 13 wells; Kabul, two wells; and Kandahar, 81 wells.

The CJCMOTF is currently working on 18 more wells across the country.

By providing the people of Afghanistan with new wells, pumps, auxiliary generators and water storage and pump houses, the task force has made it possible for farmers to increase their crop production, hospitals to treat more patients, and the general population to have enough water to drink, cook with and maintain their own personal hygiene, Harris said. □

**N**EAR Kabul, Afghanistan, home of the Coalition Joint Civil-Military Operations Task Force, Afghan villagers migrate in search of water for drinking, bathing and growing crops.

They're among the thousands of Afghans in desperate need of irrigation systems and drinking water as a result of years of war and drought.

Since the defeat of the Taliban, their nation's economy has begun to stabilize, and more and more people are returning to the homes they had abandoned, said CPT Benjamin H.

SSG Zelda Thomas-Gates and SGT Sean A. Terry are assigned to the 300th Mobile PA Det. in Kabul, Afghanistan.

**W**HILE most people his age are contemplating the “golden sunset” of retirement, COL Narayan

Deshmukh ponders the golden sunsets at Kandahar Airfield in Afghanistan.

A surgeon with the 1980th Forward Surgical Team, 64-year-old Deshmukh may be the oldest U.S. service member in Kandahar. But he has little trouble keeping up with his younger coworkers in one of the harshest and most desolate places on earth.

“I really don’t feel as though I’m the oldest person,” he said. He’s comfortable and at ease in his operating room-turned-office. He looks fit and trim. His eyes are bright. And he has a quick wit. The streaks of gray in his dark hair give him a look of distinction, and suggest experience and wisdom rather than age. He has no complaints, except for the heat.

Deshmukh requested and received an extension of his Mandatory Removal Date from the Army to serve in the war against terrorism.

“I feel that the biggest sacrifice one can make is to serve with the military during wartime and be prepared to die for one’s country,” he said.

Deshmukh came to the United States in 1969, after completing studies at the Osmania Medical Center in his hometown of Hyderabad, India. Oddly, a stamp collection he had at the time influenced his decision to study and practice advanced medicine in America rather than Australia or Great Britain. The stamps contained quotes from various leaders referencing American values.

In 1984 Deshmukh joined the U.S. Army Individual Ready Reserve and began his career as an Army surgeon with the Army Medical Department (AMEDD) Augmentation Detachment at Fort McPherson, Ga. The detach-



**COL Narayan Deshmukh examines a patient at the Army hospital in Kandahar.**

# A Handsome Man

**Story and Photo by  
SGT Calvin Williams**

ment is a temporary agency for military physicians and other medical personnel, placing them with units that need their expertise.

Today Deshmukh is also the president of the surgical staff at the Guthrie Clinic, a multidisciplinary teaching hospital in Sayre, Pa., where he teaches surgical residents and supervises the medical staff.

He has earned the expert field medical badge, air assault badge and flight surgeon Badge, after receiving age-limit waivers to undergo the tasks required. “The only time my age bothers me is when I see jump wings,” Deshmukh said.

Airborne School was the only training Deshmukh applied for but was unable to enroll in because of his age. “I was very disappointed,” he said.

Deshmukh, who has been in Afghanistan since July, earlier deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to assist American forces there. “The

Army was able to find another surgeon for Kandahar, but not a linguist to go to Guantanamo Bay,” said Deshmukh, who speaks five languages.

In Kandahar, he stays in shape by working out in the weight room. And while he doesn’t run, because of a leg injury, he consistently scores 300 on the Army Physical Fitness Test.

“In one APFT, I did 150 pushups in two minutes,” he said proudly. “It was part of a competition between medical personnel.”

“I love getting mobilized,” Deshmukh said, “and I always make sure that I’m fit and ready to go.

“I want to inspire young people and motivate older ones,” he continued. “I want them to know that even if you’re 64, you can come to Afghanistan, serve your country and return home to your grandchildren as the handsomest man in the world to them — because you’re in uniform.” □

SGT Calvin Williams is assigned to the 300th Mobile PA Det. at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan.